

CITY OF BELLEVUE
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES
December 1, 2005

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Bell, Vice Chair Young, Commissioners Glass, Northey, Yuen

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Holler, Wendle

STAFF PRESENT: Eric Miller, Kristi Oosterveen, Steve Costa, Kris Liljeblad, Department of Transportation

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Bell who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Holler and Wendle, both of whom were excused.

3. STAFF REPORTS

Capital Programming Manager Eric Miller said the move to the new City Hall is on schedule for January. There is a room lined up for Commission meetings, though the second meeting in January will not be held to allow for the move. The Commission's first meeting of the month will be in the current City Hall. During normal work hours, Commissioners visiting the building will need to take a ticket in the parking area and have it validated at the Service First desk.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None

5. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Glass said he attended the Bel-Red Corridor Study Steering Committee meeting earlier in the day. Staff and the consultants provided the group with a high flyover of existing land uses in the area, and there was a brief conversation about what should occur in the area. There appears to be a large consensus in favor of retaining the service uses that are in the area currently, though not necessarily in their existing form. There is agreement the area needs a facelift and that doing so without pricing the small businesses out of the area will be a challenge.

Chair Bell apologized for the statement he made at the November 17 meeting that the public does not know what they need. He said what he meant was the public does not know what they need because the city has not given them all the options.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Don Pickens with Westec, Ltd, 10900 NE 8th Street, spoke representing the ownership of the Sherwood

Shopping Center at 15400 NE 20th Street. He said the property has been impacted over the years by growth issues, and project CR-100 would impact the property even further. Placement of a continuous C curb between Bel-Red Road and 156th Avenue NE would essentially eliminate truck delivery to the three major tenants of Sherwood Shopping Center. Most trucks accessing the site exit SR-520 at 148th Avenue NE then travel eastbound on NE 20th Street. On the east side of the driveway there is a large bulkhead created by previous road widenings and elevation changes; if a C curb were in place, there would not be room to turn a 53-foot trailer with a cab into the driveway to access the loading docks in the back of the shopping center. One major tenant has included in their lease a clause that allows them to leave if the access points of either the loading dock entry, the NE 20th Street entry, or the 156th Avenue NE entry is eliminated or prevented from being used. More consideration should be given to project CR-100 and how it will impact the shopping center. At the very least, the property owner should be permitted to be involved in designing the project.

Mr. Matthew Finnegan, 12636 SE 60th Street, spoke on behalf of the congregation at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church on the corner of Newport Way and Factoria Boulevard SE. He said recent roadway projects in the area have improved the traffic flow immensely. However, there are still some significant traffic issues that affect the use of the church property. Project FA-001 is lower on the priority list, largely because of its cost; the project, however, deserves consideration. The church sees a significant amount of cut-through traffic through the parking lot, especially during peak times and high school hours. School busses use the parking lot and school children are present, and the cut-through traffic presents a serious safety risk. As soon as the construction work at Newport High School is completed, traffic will be increased even more. For traffic southbound on Factoria Boulevard wanting to turn left into the church parking lot there is a left-turn lane, but as set up it is necessary to sit in the traffic lane and tie up traffic. The bus stop on Newport Way near the church parking lot sees significant use and creates an ingress/egress problem because the buses block views.

Chair Bell agreed that an operational review by staff would be appropriate to see if any short-term solutions could be found.

7. STUDY SESSION

A. TFP Update: Finalize TFP Project List

Mr. Miller briefly recapped the work done to date by the Commission. He noted that the cost estimate for project EB-100 was lowered to \$4.725 million from \$5.5 million, which increases the amount of available revenue available for other projects. The revision did not, however, move the funding line.

Mr. Miller informed the Commission that Attachment 2 is a listing of all TFP candidate projects above the funding line and all uncompleted CIP projects that will automatically be included in the TFP update.

With regard to the Lakemont Boulevard pre-design study that was completed in August 2004, project manager Steve Costa said the work was done to develop designs for an ultimate buildout of Lakemont Boulevard between 171st Avenue SE and the southern city limit halfway between Forest Drive and Cougar Mountain Regional Park. The need for the study came out of the Ped/Bike Transportation Plan that identified a number of missing links for pedestrian and bicycle use throughout the corridor, and the Newcastle Transportation Facilities Plan. After the Lakemont extension was completed, the area saw a significant increase in vehicle volumes and speeds, so the study also focused on the changed traffic patterns in the area.

The services of David Evans and Associates were obtained to perform the traffic analysis and develop conceptual plans. In conjunction with the consultant's work, public outreach was conducted to determine what local residents saw as the primary problems and to get buy-in on the concepts. An online questionnaire went out in February/March of 2004 and it received about 123 responses. The top concern voiced was traffic. By almost a

two-to-one margin, the residents indicated a preference for having a single large project over multiple smaller projects in order to get the work done in as short a time as possible. Residents want to see the rural look and feel of the area retained.

An open house was conducted in May 2005 after the conceptual plans had been developed. There were more than 24 residents in attendance and the feedback about the recommendations was positive overall. In March and June the Transportation Commission was provided with updates on the design analysis and public involvement efforts, and in October the Commission was shown the final plans for the corridor.

Mr. Costa said the draft report contained eight phases for implementation along the corridor. The final report, however, organized those into three separate phases. The phases were developed to group work within the same areas in order to be more cost effective; the phases as proposed should lessen the impacts on the corridor. Phase 1 involves construction of a traffic signal at the intersection of Cougar Mountain Way and Lakemont Boulevard; there are also some pedestrian/bicycle facilities that extend to Lewis Creek Park and various medians between 171st and 164th Avenue SE.

The warrant analysis for the intersection at Cougar Mountain Way and Lakemont Boulevard indicates a signal is warranted. The residents strongly voiced concerns with being able to travel through the intersection and there is a great deal of interest in seeing improvements there; accordingly, the project is included in Phase 1.

The intersection of Lakemont Blvd. and 164th Avenue SE is in Phase 2. The recommendation lists either a roundabout or traffic signal, and the conceptual design prepared was for a roundabout in line with the community's initial interest. The intersection warrants a signal under the eight-hour peak volume criteria, but a roundabout would effect the same outcome. The cost for the roundabout, however, is much higher than the cost of a signal, thus the signal has been folded into the project description. The decision of whether to build a roundabout or traffic signal was deferred in the project description until such time that the project was programmed and available funds could be determined.

Phase 3 involves the link between Cougar Mountain Way and the regional park to the south, connecting with the Forest Drive intersection.

Mr. Miller noted that the projected traffic increases through 2015 are significant, making a signal at each intersection even more necessary. The cost of \$2.257 million as shown for project NC-103 is the estimate that includes the roundabout option as well as the non-motorized aspects. The roundabout alone comes to about \$1.4 million of the total amount, and installing just a signal could cost \$900,000 less.

Answering a question asked by Chair Bell, Mr. Costa said there is a right-turn coming off of 164th Avenue SE connecting with Lakemont Boulevard. With signalization of the intersection, that leg would have to be eliminated. He added that the operational benefits of the roundabout were not studied once the estimated cost was known. Kristi Oosterveen, CIP Coordinator, said the roundabout was shown in the final recommendation because it was what the public requested in keeping with the rural look and feel of the area.

Commissioner Glass questioned why the intersection of Lakemont Boulevard and 164th Avenue SE warrants a signal currently. He agreed that a signal is needed at the intersection with Cougar Mountain Way, primarily because the streets are not lined up properly. Mr. Costa allowed that the signal warrant for the Lakemont Boulevard intersection is qualified with the 85th percentile speed along the corridor. To the south of the intersection the speeds average 41.5 miles per hour, and north of the intersection the speeds average 39.5 miles per hour. As time progresses, the volumes will increase and speeds will be less of a factor in meeting the signal warrants. Ms. Oosterveen added that the traffic management group has observed that vehicles along the corridor are not even stopping at the stop sign because they are going too fast, and there have been accidents as a result.

The commission asked if a traffic signal at 164th Avenue SE could be built under the signal warrants program. Mr. Costa said he is currently working on the design for a T-intersection signal project that already has sidewalks on all corners. For that project, the signal installation alone is budgeted at \$480,000. The Lakemont Boulevard/164th Avenue SE intersection is also a T-intersection without a sidewalk component, but will involve some realigning. It will be too expensive to cover under the signal warrants program. Mr. Miller also pointed out it would have to compete with other funding needs in the program.

Mr. Miller presented the Commissioners with a staff alternative to the triangle study proposed at the November 17 meeting focused on planned projects in the area bounded by NE 20th Street, Bel-Red Road and 156th Avenue NE. The cost of \$300,000 was essentially picked out of the air at the meeting. The Bel-Red corridor project has been funded by the Council at almost \$1 million and staff has concerns about putting another study project on the list in the same area for any substantial amount of money. Staff agrees, however, that there is a need to look at the triangle projects given that a number of BROTS projects have been recently constructed, that other projects are planned for the immediate area, and that Microsoft and Redmond have agreed on a plan that will add 2.2 million square feet of development.

As outlined by staff, the alternative to the triangle study would determine what is necessary from an operational standpoint to optimize the peak hour traffic flow on the arterial streets in the study area while considering cost-benefit factors and impacts to alternative modes of travel, including pedestrian and bicycle. The majority of the work can be conducted by department staff with existing resources. If necessary, a consultant contract in the amount of \$25,000 to \$50,000 could be let to support the staff effort, and the funding could come from the transportation planning studies ongoing CIP program (PW-R-44).

Commissioner Northey said where appropriate the city should partner with property owners by having them contribute funding where they would have to hire an engineering firm to conduct a traffic impact analysis anyway. The partnership could generate funds in an amount to allow for a higher level of analysis.

Commissioner Glass indicated his support for the staff proposal and suggested adding to it NE 24th Street within the triangle between 156th Avenue NE and Bel-Red Road, possibly all the way down to 148th Avenue NE.

There was consensus to approve the suggestion of staff for the triangle study, to pull the study project from the TFP list, and to leave in all other projects that will be associated with the study.

With regard to project FA-003, which extends 129th Avenue SE to SE 38th Street, Mr. Miller noted that the majority of the project has been constructed through previous development. He proposed including a \$275,000 design phase to keep the project on the radar screen and preserve the ability of the city to get the needed right-of-way as development projects come along. The project is currently in the TFP for a design report; the report has been completed but without adding additional funds toward finalizing the design the project will not be on either the CIP or the 12-year plan. Mr. Miller noted that if and when 129th Avenue SE is extended, it may create the need for another signal at the intersection with Newport Way.

With regard to project FA-001, Ms. Oosterveen said the cost estimate for the project was updated during the FATS update. Mr. Miller said the project has been in the TFP in the past and only was removed when the available funds were reduced. The traffic operations group has heard repeatedly from representatives from St. Margaret's and others about the need for the project. There are some issues, including driveway alignments and the short distance between the Newport Way intersection and the entrance to the school.

Commissioner Northey suggested that if the church undertook its recent remodeling on the advice of the city that the issue will be addressed, the city has the obligation to keep the project on track. She said extra funds could be

freed by eliminating project NC-108 in favor of having it go forward as an LID, removing the NE 2nd Street/I-405 interchange project, and pulling a million dollars from project OV-003.

Commissioner Glass suggested finding the funds for FA-001 by looking for a project above the funding line that could be moved below the funding line. He suggested the Bellevue Community College campus trail project could be dropped down.

Chair Bell noted that no additional funding will need to be found if only the design phase of the project is funded. He allowed that the question of the signal would still need to be addressed.

Commissioner Young suggested that the project description for project OV-003 is pretty soft. Mr. Liljeblad commented that the project is located within the study area of the Bel-Red corridor study but allowed that it will not necessarily become a recommendation of the study.

Motion to drop project OV-003 below the funding line and raise project FA-001 above the funding line was made by Commissioner Northey. Second was by Commissioner Glass and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to fund project FA-003 at \$275,000 was made by Commissioner Northey. Second was by Commissioner Glass and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Oosterveen said the moves leave \$719,000 left to allocate. With regard to funding project NC-103, she said an additional \$638,000 would be needed even if \$900,000 were taken from the project cost to mark the difference between a signal and a roundabout.

Commissioner Northey suggesting taking \$600,000 from project DT-007, leaving \$400,000 to entice the Washington State Department of Transportation to step up and fund the project. Mr. Miller argued that when it comes to state projects, money talks, and the bigger the number the better. The city spent a significant amount of money advancing the NE 10th Street overcrossing project, and now that the state has stepped up to fully fund the project it has yet to be seen whether any of those funds will flow back to the city for redistribution.

Mr. Liljeblad agreed. He said it made a huge difference to have a large amount of money earmarked to get the project started; the city's allocation to the project made it clear to the state that the city was serious about the project.

Mr. Miller observed that the Commission had previously talked about combining projects DT-009 and DT-007. If that were done, the combined project could be given \$1 million, and that would free up \$1 million.

Motion to revise the scope of project NC-103 to include a signal instead of the roundabout and to fund the project at \$1.357 million, and to combine projects DT-009 and DT-007 and fund the combination at \$1 million, was made by Commissioner Young. Second was by Commissioner Glass and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to approve and recommend to the Council the Transportation Facilities Plan update project list as revised was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Yuen and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller said a staff management brief will be crafted to pass along the recommendation of the Commission. It will include an offer for staff or a Commission representative to attend a Council study session to delve into the details. Chair Bell said there should be a transmittal letter from the Commission as well.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None

Chair Bell called attention to the memo from former Commissioner Ron Matthew regarding recommended changes to the Commission's establishing ordinance. He said the issue will be put on the next meeting agenda for discussion.

9. NEW BUSINESS – None

Commissioner Glass reported that the island at Richards Road and SE 8th Street is overgrown with vegetation, is cracked, and appears to be marked for at least partial replacement. He asked what process is used to determine what needs to be replaced. Mr. Miller said staff will research that question and get back to the Commission with an answer.

10. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 27, 2005

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Glass. Second was by Commissioner Young and the motion carried unanimously.

12. REVIEW CALENDAR

A. Commission Calendar and Agenda

The Commission reviewed the items scheduled for discussion in upcoming meetings. It was noted that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2006.

B. Public Involvement Calendar

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Young. Second was by Commissioner Yuen and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Bell adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date